

Sunset Fort, Arizona Territory Est. 1876

Sunset Cemetery stands as a mute testimony to the undaunted spirit of the brave pioneers who forged a living from this once desolate and forbidding land. On January 24, 1876, over 200 men, women and children were called as missionaries to settle the Little Colorado River Valley. James Brown and Lot Smith were appointed to lead the expedition by President Brigham Young of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The families had ten days to prepare for the journey south. It was necessary that they depart before the melting snow swelled the rivers and streams, making travel impossible. On February 3, 1876, teams of horses, mules and oxen pulled wagons filled with the necessities of life to establish new communities in the Arizona Territory. The journey took six weeks, covering 600 miles of new and unknown country.. On Friday, the 24th day of March 1876, Lot Smith and 115 families arrived at Sunset Crossing. President Young had instructed them to settle near Sunset. Here the families divided into

companies, and held a meeting to decide where each company would locate. They wanted to keep close to one another in the event of trouble. Lot Smith's company Sunset settled north of the crossing and on the east side of the Little Colorado River. Jesse O. Ballanger's company (Ballanger's Camp - Brigham City) settled on the west side of the Little Colorado River north of the crossing. William Allen's Company (St. Joseph – Joseph City) located 23 miles upstream from Sunset across from George Lake's company (Obed) on the south side of the Little Colorado River. Each company organized in to the United Order, a cooperative system where all things were held in common, each contributing to the common good and receiving an equal share of the surplus as needed. Their attempts to dam the Little Colorado River were unsuccessful. The river would frequently flood, washing out the dams, flooding the fields and destroying the crops before they could be harvested and stored. Obed, St. Joseph, and Sunset relocated to higher ground and on Christmas Eve 1876, the Smith Company moved into the newly built fort of Sunset. Sunset was built of cottonwood logs and

measured 198 feet square, consisting of 31 dwellings 14 by 16 feet, one dining hall 55 feet by 15 feet, one school room 33 feet by 14 feet, one kitchen 15 feet by 15 feet, two store rooms 14 feet by 20 feet and 10 feet by 20 feet, a granary 8 feet by 12 feet, and a corn crib 10 feet by 32 feet. The fort housed 102 people: 19 men, 18 women, 43 boys and 22 girls. The first post office on the Little Colorado River was established at Sunset on July 5, 1876. The Post Master was Mr. Alfred M. Derrick. The post office closed November 23, 1887. The local newspaper was called the Enterprise, containing short stories, poems, and news of visiting missionaries. These early pioneers settled the territory, befriending and sharing the gospel with the Indians. After many hardships, floods and droughts, the pioneers were relieved of their calling in 1881. Many of the pioneers were called to other missions in the San Luis Valley at Manassas, Colorado and to colonize along the Gila (he-e-la) River Valley of the Arizona Territory. The last to leave Sunset was Lot Smith, in 1888. Church President Brigham Young died on August 29, 1877. President Young called Lot Smith to the Arizona

Territory and no other authority ever released him from his calling. Today this lonely windswept graveyard stands in memoriam to these early resourceful and resilient pioneering families. Sunset Cemetery is located in Homolovi Ruins State Park approximately 3 miles northeast of Winslow, Arizona. To get there travel historic RT 66 or Interstate 40 to State Route 87 North (EXIT 257) and travel North on State Route 87 1.35 miles to the entrance to Homolovi Ruins State Park. Follow the signs to the park visitor center and museum.

Interments at Sunset Cemetery

Marion Benjamin Black

Birth: Jul. 4, 1881 Apache County Arizona Territory, USA
Death: Jul. 4, 1881 Apache County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: William Grant Black
Mother: Lucretia Jane Maxwell
Buried July 5, 1881 LDS Archive record has 1879-07-26 Sunset, Apache County A.T.
Note: only hours old from Journal of Levi Mathers Savage 1876-1935

George Roselle Burk

Birth: Dec., 1882 Apache County Arizona Territory, USA
Death: Sep. 8, 1893 Navajo County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Hubert Roselle Burk
Mother: Laura Doris Morris

Marion Aaron Burk

Birth: Sep. 30, 1880 Apache County Arizona Territory, USA
Death: Feb. 6, 1881 Apache County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Hubert Roselle Burk
Mother: Lois Hamblin

Mrs. Buxton.

Birth:
Death: Nov 14/15, 1881 Yavapai County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents:
Husband:
Married:
children

James Allred Curtis

Birth: July 6, 1872 Salem, Utah, Ut Utah, USA
Death: 3 Jul 1879 Yavapai County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Moses Curtis
Mother: Elizabeth Hanks
Buried July 4, 1879

John Jones Edwards

Birth: April 6, 1798 Carmarthenshire, , Wales, Wales
Death: Dec 28, 1879 Apache County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Edward Edwards
Mother: Mary Jones
Wife: Johanna Williams
Married: May 24, 1827
Five children

Francis Asbury Hammond Jr.

Birth: September 15, 1850 South Cottonwood, Salt Lake County Utah
Death: April 27, 1876 Sunset Fort Yavapai County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Francis Asbury Hammond
Mother: Mary Jane Dilworth
Wife: Never Married
Married:
One of 12 siblings 6 girls 6 boys.
Reinturred in Utah Recorded in the Ogden Junction May 18. "Captain and secretary in Lot Smith's company, he was taken suddenly ill, with a severe pain in the right side."

Mrs. Walter Hill

Birth:
Death: 1883 Apache County Arizona Territory, USA
Wife of Sheepman, Walter Hill
Inscription: Wife of Sheepman
Note: Nothing more could be read on

this stone in 1964 not L.D.S.

Maggie James

Birth: Dec. 19, 1882 Apache
County Arizona Territory, USA
Death: Feb. 20, 1883 Apache
County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Joseph Henry
James
Mother: Elizabeth Salomia
Bloomfield
Note: Original gravestone
removed and a granite stone put
in 1990's

Joseph Ether Knight

Birth: Oct. 18, 1840 Nauvoo
Hancock County Illinois, USA
Death: Jun. 27, 1878 Yavapai
County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Newel Knight
Mother: Lydia Goldthwaite
Wife: Jane Lucinda Judd
Married: 17 Feb 1863 7
Children
Headstone placed on grave Feb
2, 1886 By Israel Call

Joseph Reid McNeil

Birth: Jun. 17, 1881 Apache
County Arizona Territory, USA
Death: Sep. 14, 1898 Navajo
County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: James (Thomas)
Reid McNeil
Mother: Mary Jane Montgomery

Phoebe Deseret "Nellie" McNeil

Birth: September 16, 1876 Yavapai
County Arizona Territory, USA
Death: June 5, 1878 Wednesday
Yavapai County Arizona Territory,
USA
Parents: Father: James (Thomas)
Reid McNeil
Mother: Phoebe Ann Merrill
Death date from W.C. McClellan's
diary: Wednesday 5 June 1878
Sawmill. {McClellan} very unwell.
Sawing today. About noon Jas
McNeil arrived here with dying child.
It breathed its last in a few moments.
Helped make coffin in afternoon. He
started for camp about 5 o'clock.
F.G. Nielson's Diary "6 Thursday
June 1878 Fast day Fasted till
noon....Attended fast meeting which
was occupied in paying respects to
Bro.McNeils little girl Nellie who died.
The parents came here with the child
this morning. Remarks were made
by.....Funeral took place at 5 pm on
hill southeast of fort...."

Baby Miller or Meiller or Mueller

Birth:
Death: Nov 14/15, 1881 Yavapai
County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father:
Mother:
? siblings Brigham City?
WCMcClellan

Pvt. James Gadison (Gad) Morris

Birth: 1830 Franklin County Georgia,
USA
Death: Mar. 21, 1878 Yavapai
County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: James Morris
Mother: Lucy Parham
Wife: Elizabeth Wanslee
Married: 6 Jan 1852 11 Children
Lived at Ballenger's Camp (Brigham
City, AZ) may have died from a heart
attack. Gad was enlisted as a PVT
in Co. C, 40th Reg, Georgia Infantry,
May 1, 1862, he was captured at
Vicksburg, Miss. 7-4-1863, and again
in 7/1864 War Dept. showed him 6'1"
dark hair & dark eyes.
Note: headstone in SE corner of
cemetery, body may not have been
interred here. Some references said,
"Buried along Little Colorado River."

Frihoff Brigham Neilson

Birth: Jan. 10, 1878 Yavapai County
Arizona Territory, USA
Death: Aug. 22, 1879 Apache County
Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Frihoff Godfrey
Neilson
Mother: Emma Waitstill Mecham
Buried 08/23/1879

Silas Harvey Norton

Birth: Jan. 3, 1872 Salt Creek Nephi
Juab County Utah, USA
Death: Feb 16, 1878 Yavapai County

Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: John Alfred
Norton
Mother: Mary Sophia Marble
Buried Feb 17, 1878

J. C. Plumb

Birth: Feb 8, 1879 Sunset,
Yavapai County Arizona Territory,
USA
Death: Aug 16, 1879 Brigham
City, Apache County Arizona
Territory, USA
Parents: Father: John Merlin
Plumb
Mother: Mary (Polly) Ann Clifford
1 of 14 siblings 10 girls 4 boys

Marius Earl Porter

Birth: Jul. 8, 1880 Porterville
Morgan County Utah, USA
Death: Aug. 10, 1881 Apache
County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Sanford Marcius
Porter
Mother: Nina Malinda Leavitt

Smith Doolittle Rogers

Birth: Aug. 31, 1878 Parowan Iron
County Utah, USA
Death: Jan. 10, 1879 Yavapai
County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Smith Doolittle
Rogers
Mother: Eliza Snow Smith

BabySmith

Birth: USA
Death: Sept 25, 1881 Mormon Lake
Yavapai County Arizona Territory,
USA
Parents: Father: Jedediah Heber
Smith
Mother: Sylvia Stoddard
Died at Mormon Lake ,Buried at
Sunset 26 Sept 1881

George Albert Smith

Birth: Sep. 9, 1874 Farmington Davis
County Utah, USA
Death: Jun. 19, 1883 Apache County
Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Lot Smith
Mother: Alice Ann Richards
Drowned in Little Colorado
Plot: Sunset Cemetery NE corner

Rhoda Minerva (Minnie) Smith

Birth: Jun. 8, 1885 Apache County
Arizona Territory, USA
Death: Jul. 12, 1886 Apache County
Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Lot Smith
Mother: Alice Ann Richards
Died from Scarlet Fever Buried on
July 13, 1886

Wilford Woodruff Smith

Birth: Dec. 28, 1879 Apache County
Arizona Territory, USA
Death: Mar. 14, 1883 Apache County
Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Lot Smith

Mother: Alice Ann Richards
Died as a result of falling into a vat of
boiling lye water during soap making,
being burned, he died on the third
day after the accident.
Plot: Sunset Cemetery NE corner

John (Baby Boy) Wright

Birth: Jan. 21, 1877 Yavapai County
Arizona Territory, USA
Death: Jan. 21, 1877 Yavapai
County Arizona Territory, USA
Parents: Father: Joseph Wright
Mother: Betsey Jane Bowers
Lived one hour buried January 21,
1877
From Journal of Levi Mathers
Savage
As of March 14, 2005 this is our most
complete list of those who lie in rest
at Sunset Cemetery.

Arizona Territory

Arizona Territory was part of the
Territory of New Mexico under the
terms of the 1848 Treaty of
Guadalupe Hidalgo and the 1853
Gadsden Purchase. On February 24,
1863, the Arizona Territory became
separate from the New Mexico
Territory and when Sunset camp was
established on March 24, 1876 it was
recognized as a part of Yavapai
County. On February 14, 1879 the
area was added to the newly formed
Apache County which included a

large portion of Mohave County. March 21, 1895 the area became the newly formed Navajo County. On February 14, 1912 Arizona Became the 48th State in the Union.

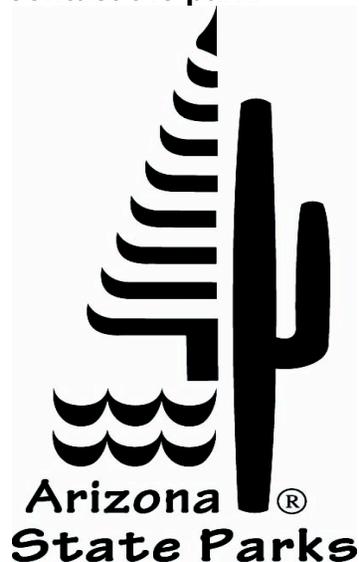
Homolovi Ruins State Park is the first archaeological park in the Arizona State Parks Board's system. The park encompasses over 4000 acres of upper-Sonoran-grass-land bisected by the Little Colorado River at an elevation of 4900 feet above sea level. More than 300 archaeological sites have been identified within the park's boundary, including four very late fourteenth century pueblo ruin sites once occupied by the ancestors of the present day Hopi Indians. All facilities are accessible to handicapped persons.

Park is open 365 days a year, Visitor Center–Museum CLOSED Christmas Day. Checkout time for camping is 2:00 p.m. AZ-MST

Arizona State Parks Mission

"Managing and conserving Arizona's natural, cultural and recreational resources for the benefit of the people, both in our Parks and through our Partners."

If you have any information about the cemetery or the historic forts and would like to share this information, please contact the park.

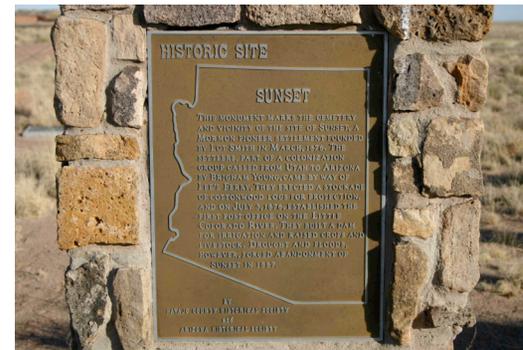


Homolovi Ruins State Park

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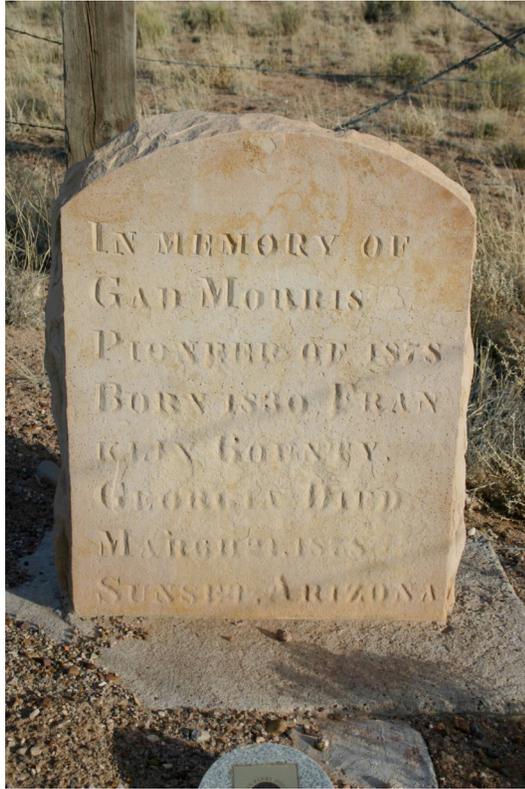
Entrance to Sunset Cemetery



Joseph Ether Knight



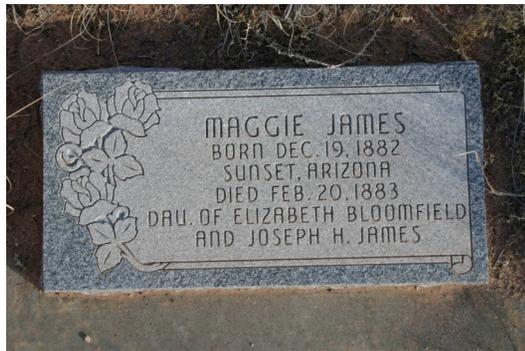
Frihoff Brigham Nielson



James Gadison "Gad" Morris



*Double Marker for Lot Smith's sons
George Albert and Wilford Woodruff*



Maggie James



*George Albert Wilford Woodruff
Smith*

Photographs by ©Kenn Evans, 11

2005